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F-75116 Paris(FR)(54) **AUTOMATIC TOILET PAPER FEEDER.**

(57) This invention relates to an automatic toilet paper feeder. A toilet paper driving motor (19) is actuated by a detection signal from a non-contact sensor (34) for a period set by a timer (33) to deliver a predetermined length of toilet paper, and when this paper is cut by cutters (24,24'), one operation cycle is completed to prepare for the next cycle. A safety circuit (S) of a cutter motor (28) is provided so that when foreign matters exceeding the cutting power of the cutters (24,24') are clamped between them, a cutter motor (28) is rotated reversely and the cutters (24,24') are returned to the original operation start position. Toilet paper driving rollers (10, 11) are made of non-metallic flexible members (10b,11b) divided into a plurality of segments in order to prevent the toilet paper, which is easily chargeable, from being entangled due to electrostatic suction and a contact portion (31b) having a small area is

provided on a guide plate (31) below the cutters (24,24'). The movable blades (24b,24b') of the cutters (24, 24') are brought into pressure contact with fixed blades (24a,24a') by a spring (26) so as to cut sharply the soft and flexible toilet paper (5). A receiving portion (32) is formed in an L-shape so that the toilet paper (5) delivered in the predetermined length can be folded into a predetermined width and supplied irrespective of its delivered length. The receiving portion is also adjustable in a vertical direction. An openable cover (1a) is disposed on the front surface of the case (1) so that when any paper or foreign matter is clamped in the toilet paper driving rollers (10,11) or the cutters (24, 24'), it can be removed easily by opening the cover (1a). When this cover (1a) is opened, the power switch is turned off so that the clamped matter can be removed safely.

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AN AUTOMATIC TOILET PAPER SUPPLIER.

Technical Field

The present invention relates to an automatic toilet paper supplier capable of supplying a piece of paper cut by a required length without touching.

Prior art

Conventionally, a roll of toilet paper is mounted in a toilet paper holder installed in a toilet room, and the user draws it out by a required length to sever it for use.

In toilet rooms located in public facilities, department stores, hotels and the like, unspecified individuals use the paper supplier, and accordingly, the users cannot help feeling of reluctance and hesitation to use the supplier and it also presents problems that it is not desirable for the public from the point of sanitation. Further, although some kind of roll paper has means of separating by roulette lines to facilitate the cutting, much of paper loss occurs during the severing operation of careless users.

Then, in order to eliminate above-mentioned drawbacks, an automatic toilet paper supplier capable of supplying paper and cutting in a required length by an operation of the supplier through a non-contact type switch and a driving motor during a pre-determined term, has been proposed by the present applicant in a pending patent application filed in Japan as patent application No. 890/1987 (publication number No. 171532/1988).

The automatic paper supplier proposed in the application reveals, however, that, when the paper supplier operates on the defective parts in the roll paper having irregularly wound paper end folded in multiple layers, or any foreign substances of hardness beyond the capacity of the cutter, should be caught in its passage through delivery rollers, by accident or deliberately, the supplier stops its operation at the defective parts or with the substances held caught in, causing it occasionally to encounter with drawbacks to break the fuse in the power source or to cause a serious over-heat damage in the cutter motor.

Meanwhile, when a blockage of paper occurs at the paper driving rollers or between cutter blades, or any foreign substances caught in the rollers, the operation to clear the blockage often actuates the non-contact switch to start to foster the blockage of paper or the holding of foreign substances, or in the worst case, causing the injury of the user.

Further, in a case of thinner paper, it tends to

be electrically charged and sticks to a paper driving roller or on a paper guide plate, causing further blockage or jamming of paper delivery.

Furthermore, a thinner and soft paper tends to be caught between blades of the paper cutter un-
abling the satisfactory cutting thereof.

Paper delivery being in vertical direction, user of the supplier must hold with his hands the end tip of paper not to fall off before the cutting operation, and fold it into a proper size to use.

The purpose of the present invention lies in the solution of the problems described above, and to propose an automatic paper supplier of high performance of convenience and practicality.

The first of objects of the present is to present an automatic toilet paper supplier operable of supplying a piece of paper cut into a required length in a receiver by a non-contact actuation of a non-contact switch, as well capable of automatically regain its original start position of cutter to operate without any break of the fuse in the power source or causing a serious over-heat damage in the cutter motor, even when the supplier operates on the defective parts in the roll paper having irregularly wound paper end folded in multiple layers, or should any foreign substances of hardness beyond the capacity of the cutter be caught in the passage.

Another object of the present is to present a switch door enabling user to access for operation to clear the blockage easier and secure the electric source off during the operation, when a blockage of paper occurs at the paper driving rollers or between cutter blades, or any foreign substances caught in the paper passage.

Still another object of the present is to present a driving roller and a guide plate for easily charged paper free from electro-statically stick to cause clinging during delivery of paper.

Further object of the present is to present a pair of cutter blades capable of cut sharply thinner and soft paper without being caught between blades.

Still further object of the present is to present a paper receiver capable of supplying folded piece of paper in desirable width notwithstanding its length.

Summary of Invention

The automatic toilet paper supplier of the present invention is characterized in that, said supplier comprises means to mount a roll of toilet paper, paper driving rollers driven by a driving motor, a paper cutter consisting of a movable blade driven by a cutter motor and a fixed blade, a

control circuit for operations of the paper driving motor and the cutter motor and a holder case to house all of the components mentioned above, said control circuit including a safety circuit for the cutter motor composed so as to actuate the cutter motor, when the cutting cycle of the cutter does not terminate during the lapse of pre-determined time, to reset the movable blade to its original starting position.

According to the present invention, therefore, toilet paper is supplied without touching by hand, by non-contact operation of the only actuation of non-contact switch, and cut into a reasonable length to be sent to the paper receiver. In the meantime, when foreign substances of hardness beyond the capacity of the cutter blades are involved between the cutter blades, the cutter motor starts to run in reverse direction to regain its original starting position to prevent the overload of the cutter motor.

Further, a switch door is installed on the front side of the holder case in front of the paper driving rollers, and even when the blockage of paper or involving of any foreign substances occurs in the paper driving rollers or in the paper cutter, the door allows to access and clean the blockage or remove the substances safely keeping the power off with the door open by means of the interlocking of the door switch with an on-off of the motor circuit.

In the next feature, a pair of paper driving rollers are divided into plurality of rollers spaced apart in the longitudinal direction of their shafts and made of non-metal elastic material, and a guide plate for the paper is configured so as to have a small contact area facing to the delivered paper to prevent the electrically charged paper stick or cling onto the paper driving rollers or the guide plate.

In the cutter assembly, a movable blade is pressed onto a fixed blade by spring so as to enable the cutter cut sharply even a thinner and soft paper without being held between the blades.

The paper receiver is fixed under the holder case and is formed in a form of open cage with a vertical rear part fixed on its top to the case, a bottom part engaged with the rear part at its bottom and extending forward therefrom, and front part, and the bottom part is adjustable vertically step-wise to receive a piece of paper folded therein in a constant width notwithstanding the length delivered.

Brief description of the drawings

Fig. 1 shows an elevation view of an automatic toilet paper supplier to illustrate its inner composition;

Fig. 2 shows a left side view of the same with

its left side cover removed;

Fig. 3 shows a right side view of the same with its right side cover removed;

Fig. 4 shows a sectional view along line A - A in the direction of an arrow;

Fig. 5 shows a external front view of the same with its cover fixed;

Fig. 6 through 8 each shows a perspective view of various embodiment of a guide plate.

Fig. 9 shows a plan view of another embodiment of a cutter;

Fig. 10 shows a electric control circuit with a safety circuit employed in the present invention;

Fig. 11 (a),(b),(c),(d) illustrate steps of behavior of paper folded in the paper receiver in

Detailed description of the invention

The construction of an automatic toilet paper supplier of the present invention is explained in detail based on a preferable embodiment.

As shown in Fig. 1 through 5, a holder case 1 consists of a front switch door, bottom plate 1b, back plate 1c, left side plate 1d and right side plate 1e, each in a stepped shape, intermediate cover 1f, left side cover 1g, right side cover 1h, assembled into a box.

The switch door 1a is movable by hinges 2, 2 on its lower edge from its closed position to an outward open position shown in imaginary line, and the cover cooperates with a power switch 3 fixed on the left side plate 1d to make the power switch 3 on in its closed position, and cut the switch 3 off in its opened position. Reference number 4 indicates door knob on the switch door 1a.

A roll of toilet paper 5 is mounted rotatably around a supporting shaft 6 in the holder case 1 and projecting rods 6a at the both ends of the shaft 6 engages with holes 7 provided on the upper part of left and right side plates 1d and 1e. Reference number 8 indicates a flap cover to prevent the roll of paper from loosening.

The intermediate plate 1f is a horizontal plate slightly bent in wavy line, and its front edge and the top edge of switch door 1a are bent downward to form a guide slit 9 for passage of unwound paper from the paper roll 5.

Directly below the guide slit 9, a pair of paper driving rollers, a front roller 10 and a rear roller 11 are fixed on the shafts 10a and 11a in parallel.

These rollers 10, 11 are divided into short part rollers 10b and 11b made of non-metallic and elastic material, of rubber, for instance, to prevent roll paper 5, which tends to be electrically charged, stick and cling onto the surface of rollers.

Shaft 10a and 11a each is supported on a horizontal shaft 10d and 11d through brackets 10c

and 11c disposed between rollers 10b and 11b, and the shafts 10d and 11d are supported on the side plates 1d and 1e. Both ends of shaft 10a and 11a are inserted in horizontal slits 12, 12 provided on both of side plates 1d and 1e and are rotatable and movable back and forth, and the rear shaft 11a is supported by means of bracket 13 at its fixed position on the side plates at both ends. While the front shaft 10a is supported to move back and forth along the slit 12 by means of swinging bracket 14 connected with the front shaft 10d at its bottom arm, and the top arm of swinging bracket 14 is biased by a spring 15 in the direction of rear driving roller 11 to let the front driving roller 10 contact tightly to the driving roller 11.

At one end of the roller shaft 10a and 11a, a set of engaging gears 16 and 17 of the same diameter are fixed, and the geared pulley 18 disposed on one end of the rear shaft 11a and geared pulley 20 disposed on a out-put shaft of paper driving motor 19 in the holder case 1 are connected by an endless geared belt 21 to drive the two driving rollers 10 and 11 by the paper driving motor 19 in the direction of forward paper delivery.

Below the paper driving rollers 10 and 11, there lies a scissor type cutter 24 composed of a fixed blade 24a supported on brackets 22 and 23, and a movable blade 24b beneath it, pivoted on the bolt 25 at one end to the bracket 23.

The movable blade 24b is pressed onto the fixed blade 24a by a pressing spring 26 engaged on the free end, and is connected at its middle to a crank bar 27 to be swung by a cutter motor 28 from its starting position to its cutting position, by controlling operation of a normal-close first limit switch 29 and a normal-open second limit switch 30, disposed alongside the blade 24 and regulated by a timer, described below.

Below the cutter 24, a guide plate 31 to guide toilet paper 5 vertically to a paper receiver 32 is disposed. The plate 31 is provided with means of contacting of a size as small as possible to prevent the chargeable paper from electro-statically stick to it causing uneven delivery of paper.

In Fig. 6, an example of the guide plate 31 is provided on its body plate 31a with a plurality of ribs 31b of small area to form convex face to the front by press formation.

Other embodiments of the contacting means of small area are shown in Fig. 7 and 8. In Fig. 7, each of the ribs 31b is made of band plate and is fixed on the flat body plate 31a, and in Fig. 8, the ribs 31b are made by punching out the body plate 31a leaving bridging area as ribs 31b. In short, the various means are available to form ribs 31b in any style to reduce the contacting area between paper 5 and the guide plate 31 as much as possible.

Fixed under the bottom plate 1b of the holder

case 1, a paper receiver 32 is disposed. The paper receiver 32 is assembled with bars in a form of an open cage, and consists of a vertical rear part 32a fixed on its top to the case 1, a horizontal bottom part 32b engaged with the rear part 32a at its rear edge and extending forward, and a vertical front part 32c connected to the front side of the bottom part 32b, and the bottom part 32b together with the front part 32c are adjustable vertically stepwise with its hook 32d engaged with any of selected hangers 32e formed on the rear part 32a.

The mode of vertical adjustment of the bottom part 32b with front part 32c is not limited to the embodiment described above, and can, of course, be modified in various manner. For example, the bottom part 32b with the front part 32c are supported on the rear part 32a by means of pressing spring plate to be able to slide along it without any step.

Further in the drawings, reference numeral 33 represents a first timer, 34 is a non-contact type sensor, 35 is a relay depending to the sensor 34, 36 is a power switch, 37 is a fuse box and 38 is a plug for electric power source.

Fig. 9 shows another embodiment of the present invention having a cutter of parallel action type, instead of a scissor type cutter. The cutter 24' has a fixed blade 24a' and a movable blade 24b' engaged on the fixed blade 24a' by means of bolts 39 at their both ends parallel with each other, and the movable blade 24b' moves back and forth with its slits 40 disposed at both ends thereof along the bolts 39. By a pressing coil spring 26' inserted around the bolt 39, the movable blade 24b' contacts tightly on the fixed blade 24a', and is biased by a pair of tension spring 41 in the direction to leave from the fixed blade 24a'.

The movable blade 24b' has a pair of rollers 42 on its rear edge, and they contact with a pair of eccentric cams 46 fixed on a cam shaft 45 driven by cutter motor 28 through gears 43 and 44, and one revolution of cam shaft 45 makes 1 cycle of back and forth motion of the movable blade 24b' to cut the paper 5 passing through the cutter 24'.

At the position of starting and ending of the cutting motion, the first limit switch 29 and the second limit switch 30 are disposed alongside of the movable blade 24b' to be regulated by a timer, as described regarding to the blade 24 before.

Fig. 10 shows an overall electric control circuit including a safety circuit S employed in the present invention.

Besides the reference numerals shown before, 47 represents a self retaining circuit relay (CR), 47a is its contact point, 48 is a normal-close first timer switch, 49 is a normal-open second timer switch, 50 is a reverse switch for the cutter motor (M1) 28, 51 is the second timer to actuate a reverse switch

50 when the cutter 24 does not terminate its cutting cycle action in the pre-determined time.

Operation

Next, the operation of the present invention shall be explained.

Before the use of the supplier, a roll of toilet paper 5 is mounted in the holder case 1 by inserting the projecting rods 6a of the supporting shaft 6 in the holes 7 on the side plates 1d and 1e. Then, with the plug 38 inserted, the power switch 36 is turned on. Inserting of the tip end of the toilet paper 5 between the paper driving rollers 10 and 11 through the guide slit 9 enables the supplier to be ready for starting. Inserting the paper 5 is possible without opening of the switch door 1a.

To start with the use of the supplier, firstly, the first timer (TR1) 33 is set to hold a time to deliver the paper 5 in a length enough. Then, an action of a hand of the user in front of the non-contact sensor 34 to cut the beam thereof makes the normal-open relay 35 close for a moment. That makes the output of the relay 35 through the normal-close first limit switch 29 actuate the self retaining circuit relay 47 to keep its contact point 47a closed to start the operation of the first timer 33 (TR1), while, through the first switch 48, the paper driving motor (M1) 19 starts to drive the front and rear paper driving rollers 10 and 11 in a direction of delivery of paper 5, through the driving system composed of the geared pulley 20 on the motor shaft, the geared belt 21, the gear 17 on the rear shaft 11a and the gear 16 on the front roller shaft 10a.

Both of the rollers 10 and 11 are formed of the roller 10b and 11b, divided into a plurality and made of non-metallic and elastic material, and should the rollers 10b and 11b be charged, the charging never occurs throughout the rollers, and the paper 5 is delivered smoothly on the driving rollers 10 and 11 without sticking or clinging around them.

After the elapse of the pre-determined time on the first timer (TR1) 33, by the signal of the timer 33, the first timer switch 48 opens and the paper driving motor (M1) 19 stops and the paper 5 stops at its length. While, at the same time, the normal-open second timer switch 49 closes to make the circuit of the cutter motor (M2) 28 through the reverse switch 50 in forward position, and the movable blade 24b of the cutter 24 starts its operation. At the same time, the circuit of the second timer (TR2) 51 is closed to start its operation. With the start of the blade 24b, the normal-close first limit switch 29 is opened to release the close-holding of the contact point 47a by the signal of the self

retaining circuit relay 47. With the cut-off of the power circuit of the first timer (TR1) 33 and the paper driving motor (M1) 19, the first timer switch 48 regains its original closed state, and the second timer switch 49 regains its original open state, and at the same time, the normal-open second timer switch 30 closes. Here, with the return of the first timer switch 48 to the closed state, the circuit works equally by the opening of the contact point 47a, and with the return of the second timer switch 49 to the open state, the circuit works equally by the closing of the second limit switch 30, and the halting of the paper driving motor (M1) 19, the action of the cutter motor (M2) 28, and the operation of the second timer (TR2) 51 are continued respectively. And by the operation of the movable blade 24b, the paper 5 is cut into a required length, then, after the return of the blade 24b after 1 cycle to the starting position, the first limit switch 29 is closed and the second limit switch 30 is opened to stop the cutter motor (M2) 28 as well as the second timer (TR2) 51 is stopped its action to terminate the delivery and the cutting of the paper 5, to be ready for the next cycle.

During the operation of 1 cycle mentioned, if any foreign substance of hardness beyond the capacity of the cutter 24 is involved in the cutter 24 and the movable blade 24b does not return to the start position in the pre-determined time for 1 cycle of operation, then the safety circuit S of the present invention starts to work.

By the signal of the second timer (TR2) 51, the reverse switch 50 is changed over to the reverse direction, and the cutter motor (M2) 28 drives the movable blade 24b in reverse direction to return to the start position, and return the first limit switch 29 to close, and return the second limit switch 30 to open to be ready for the next operation. Accordingly, even when the cutter is over-loaded beyond its capacity, troubles such as the break down of the fuse 37 and the over-heat damage of the cutter motor 28 are prevented.

Fig. 11 illustrates the process of receiving the toilet paper 5 in the receiver 32 in the order of the delivery and folding operation. In Fig. 11(A), when the paper 5 is delivered by the driving of the front and rear rollers 10 and 11, the tip of the paper 5 descends toward the rear part 32a of the receiver 32 according to the curling of the paper 5 to reach the bottom part 32b. Dotted line shows the next movement of forming the fold. In Fig. 11(B), further delivery of the paper 5 lays the paper on the bottom part 32b flat and then the following hanging part reaches to the front part 32c to be folded there toward the rear part 32a. Dotted line shows the next step of forming the second fold. In Fig. 11(C), the second fold reaches to the rear part 32a and the hanging part descends on top of the folded

paper to be laid in a manner of dotted line to form the third fold.

In Fig. 11(D), the given time for the first timer (TR1) 33 elapses to actuate the cutter 24 to cut the hanging part of the paper 5 to drop and form the third fold and lay it on the preceding part of paper in a required length in 4 layers.

That means the paper 5 is folded in the width along the length of the bottom part 32b to be folded times corresponding to the length of cutting of the paper 5 in the receiver 32. If the height of the receiver 32 is adjusted to determine the length of required paper, the last part of the paper is folded neatly without producing any odd part.

Industrial Applicability

The present invention offers an automatic toilet paper supplier capable of supplying a piece of paper in a folded form of a required length without touching the supplier, and the supplier is not only applicable for toilets located in public facilities, department stores, hotels and the like, where unspecified individuals use the paper supplier but for toilets in average homes, and is very easy and convenient to use without a feeling of sanitary hesitation.

Moreover, the invention presents a trouble-free convenient paper supplier with promising popularity to contribute to the present high level of living.

Claims

1. An automatic toilet paper supplier comprising means to mount a roll of toilet paper, paper driving rollers driven by a driving motor, a paper cutter consisting of a movable blade driven by a cutter motor and a fixed blade, a control circuit for operations of the paper driving motor and the cutter motor and a holder case to house all of the components mentioned above; said control circuit including a safety circuit for the cutter motor composed so as to actuate the cutter motor, when the cutting cycle of the cutter does not terminate during the lapse of pre-determined time, to reset the movable blade to its original starting position.
2. An automatic toilet paper supplier defined in claim 1, said safety circuit is composed of a reverse switch for the cutter motor and a timer to change over the reverse switch in reverse direction.
3. An automatic toilet paper supplier defined in claim 1, said paper cutter being a scissor type or a pair of parallel blades type.
4. An automatic toilet paper supplier defined in claim 2, said paper cutter being a scissor type or a pair of parallel blades type.
5. An automatic toilet paper supplier defined in claim 1, said movable blade being pressed onto a fixed blade by spring.
6. An automatic toilet paper supplier defined in claim 2, said movable blade being pressed onto a fixed blade by spring.
7. An automatic toilet paper supplier defined in claim 1, said control circuit for motors being composed so as to start said paper driving motor, by a detecting signal from a non-contact type sensor, to drive rollers during a timer-determined time to deliver paper, and, after the stop of the motor, to start said cutter motor to cut paper to terminate one cycle of operation, then to regain its original waiting posture for the next cycle of operation.
8. An automatic toilet paper supplier defined in claim 1, said paper driving rollers being divided into a plurality of rollers spaced apart in the longitudinal direction of their shafts and made of non-metallic elastic material.
9. An automatic toilet paper supplier defined in claim 1, said supplier comprising a paper receiver fixed under the holder case, said paper receiver being formed in a form of open cage consisting of a vertical rear part fixed on its top to the case, a horizontal bottom part engaged with the rear part at its rear edge and extending forward, and a vertical front part connected to the front side of the bottom part, and said bottom part being adjustable along the rear part vertically stepwise to receive a piece of paper folded therein in a constant width notwithstanding the length of paper delivered.
10. An automatic toilet paper supplier defined in claim 1, said supplier further comprising a guide plate under said paper cutter, and said guide plate being configured so as to have a small contact area facing to the delivered paper.
11. An automatic toilet paper supplier defined in claim 8, said supplier further comprising a guide plate under said paper cutter, and said guide plate being configured so as to have a small contact area facing to the delivered paper.

12. An automatic toilet paper supplier defined in claim 1, said holder case having a switch door in front of the paper driving rollers, and the opening and closing of the switch door being interlocked with the on-off action of power source for the two motors in the case. 5

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FIG. 1

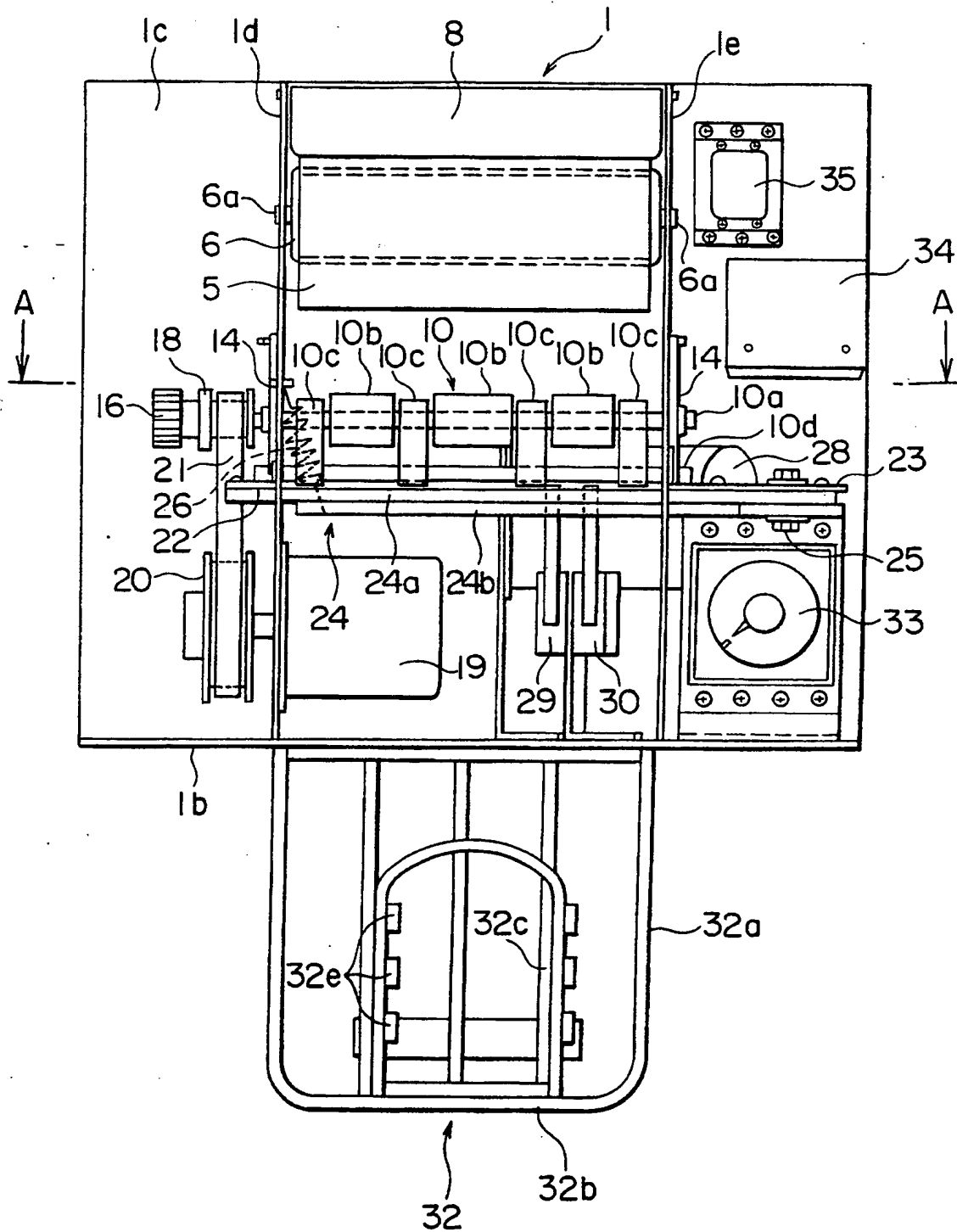


FIG. 2

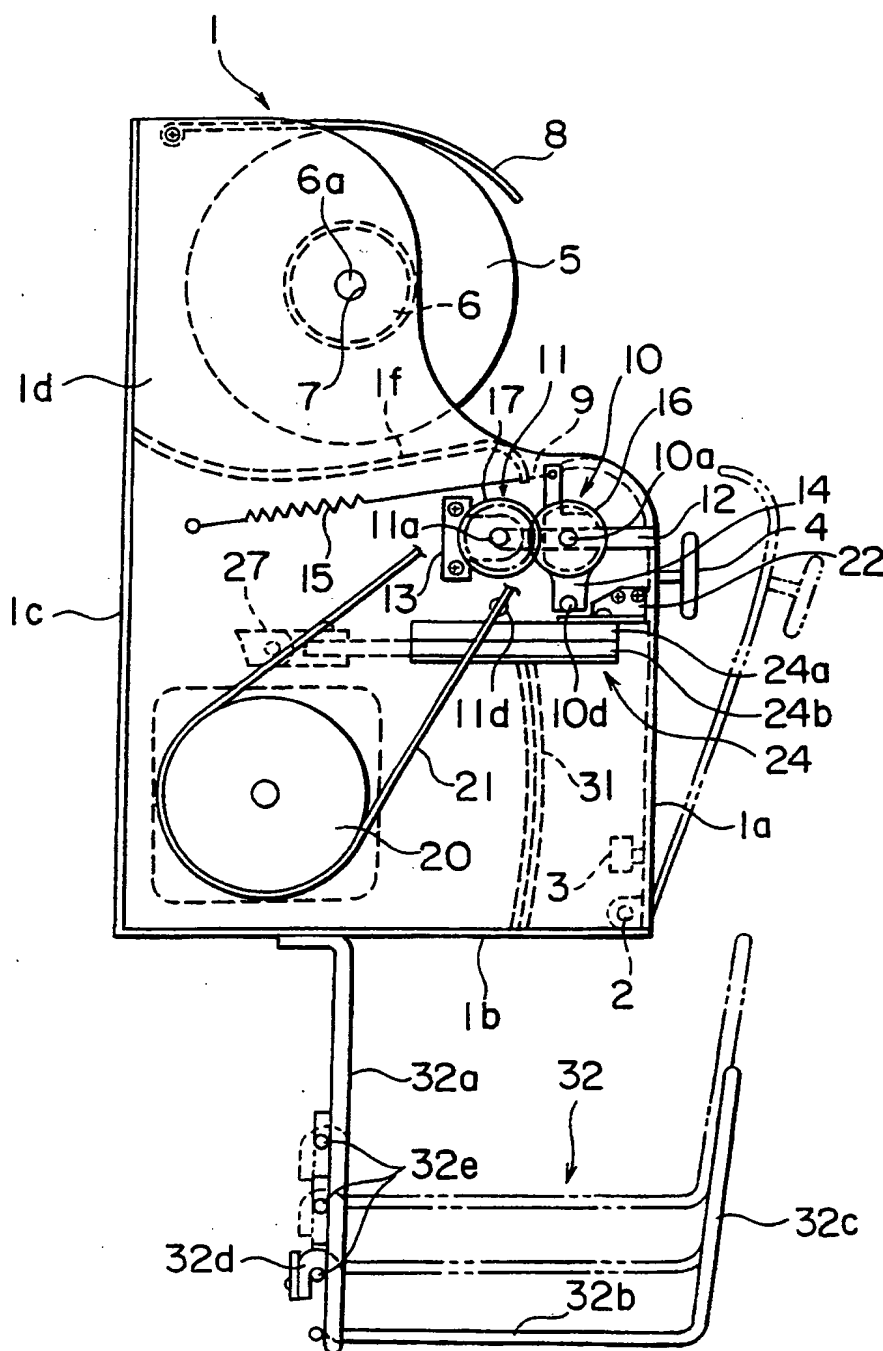


FIG. 3

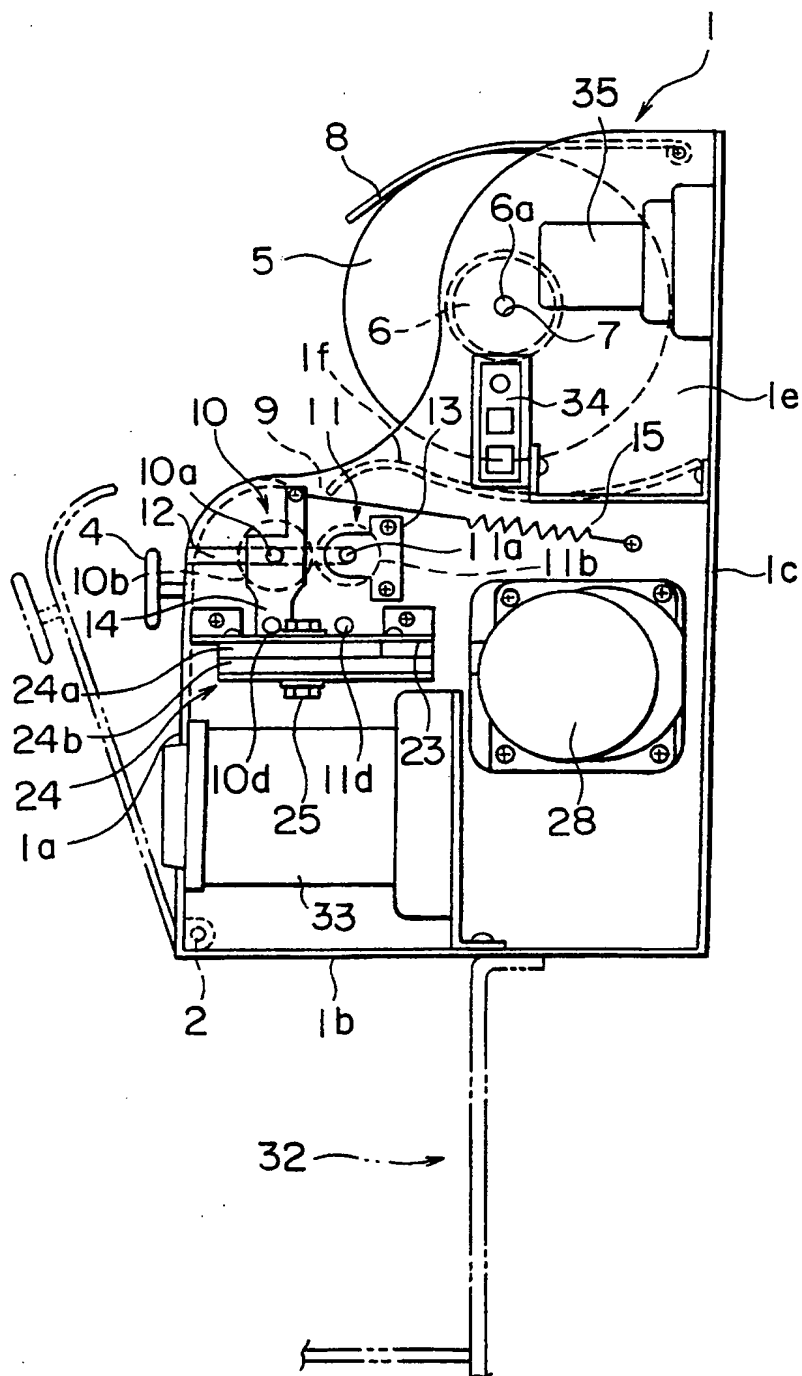


FIG. 4

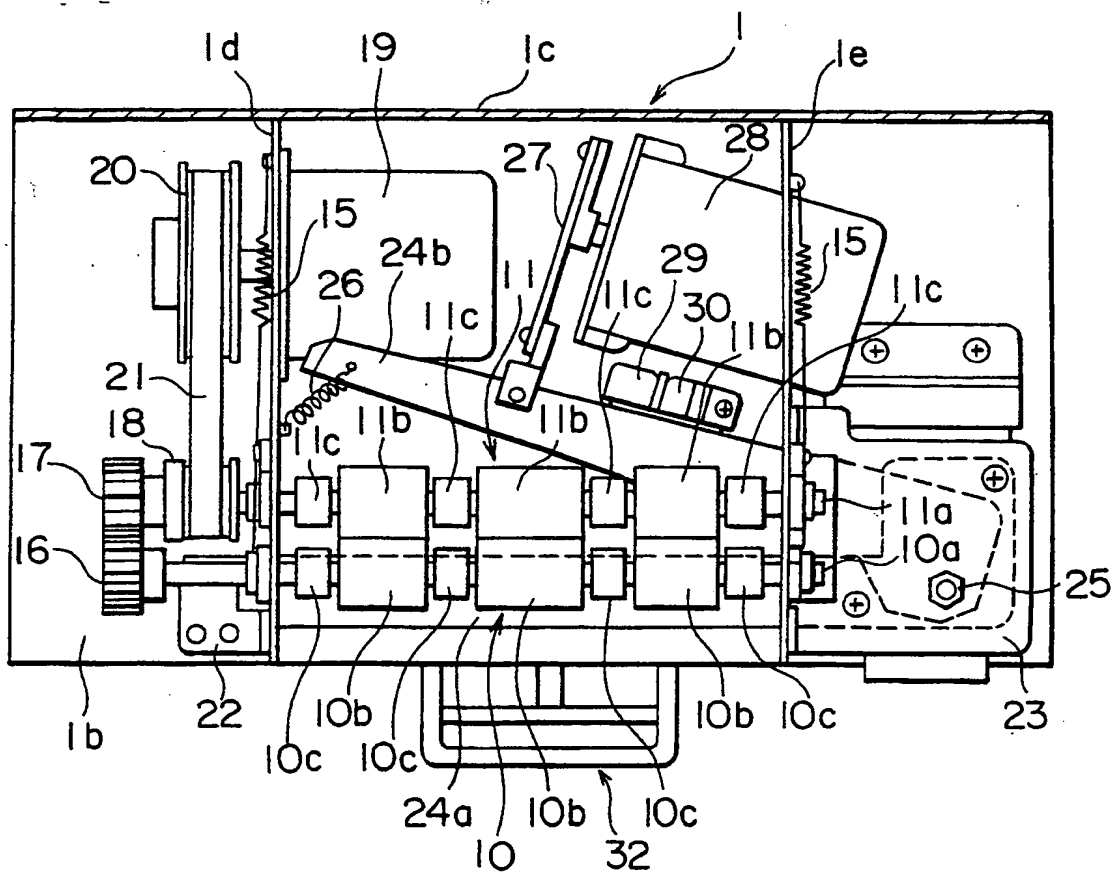


FIG. 5

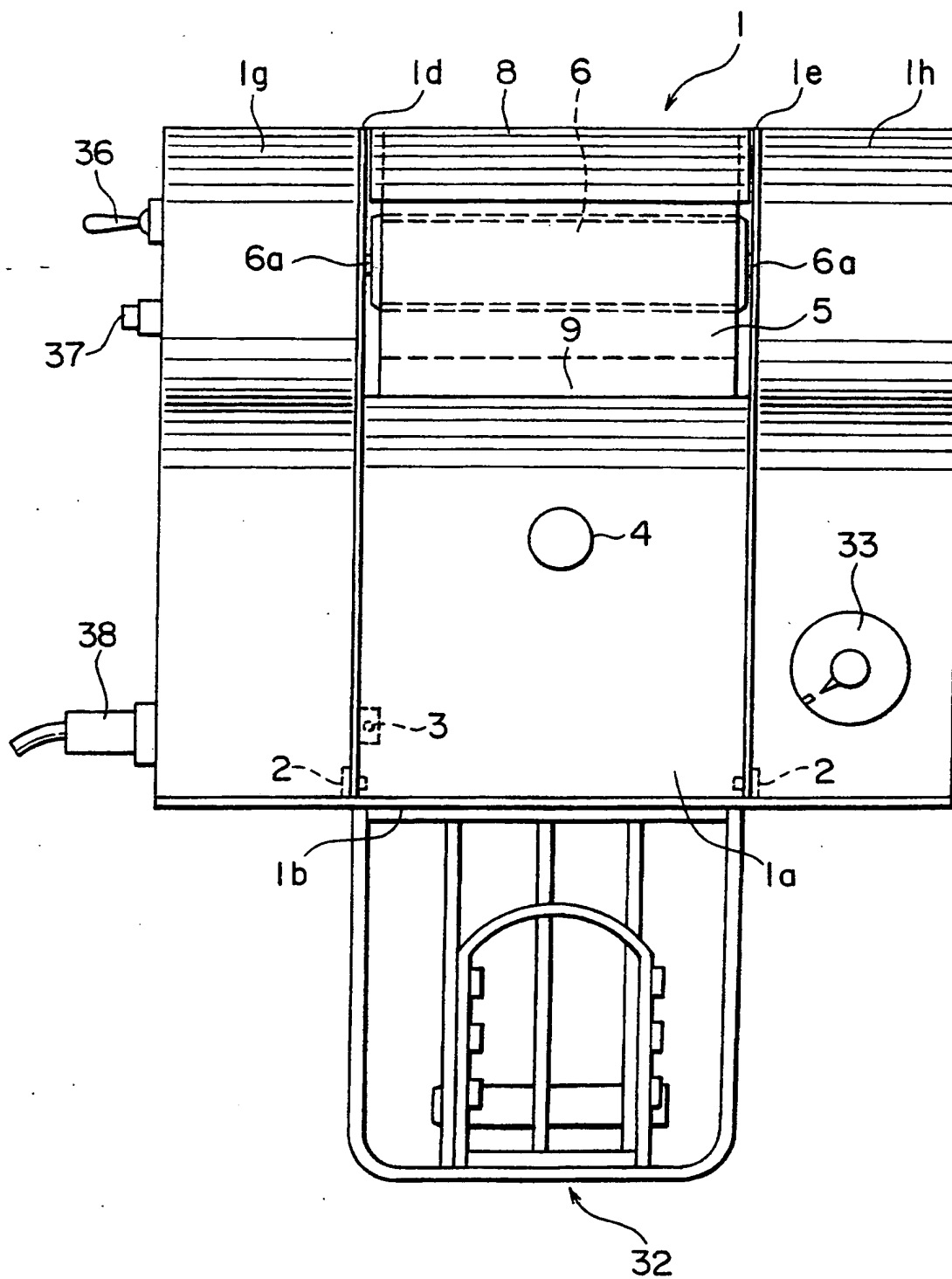


FIG. 6

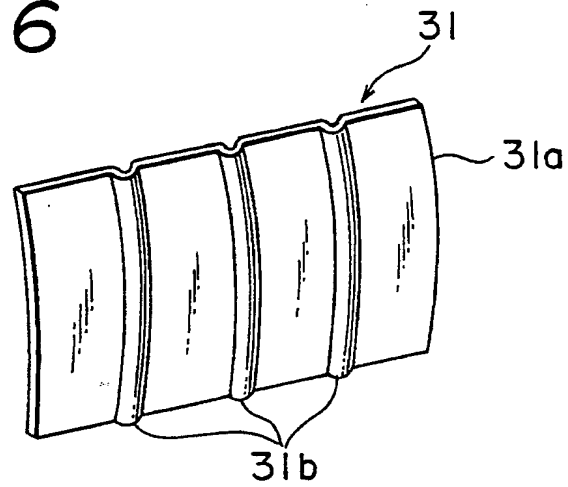


FIG. 7

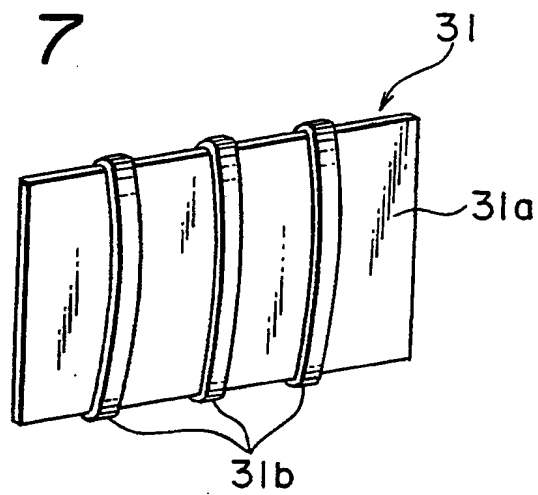


FIG. 8

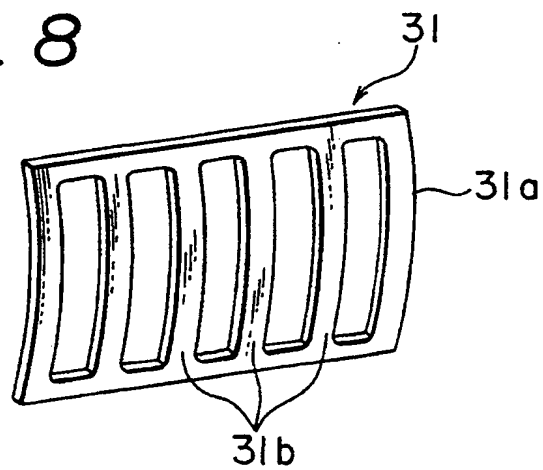


FIG. 9

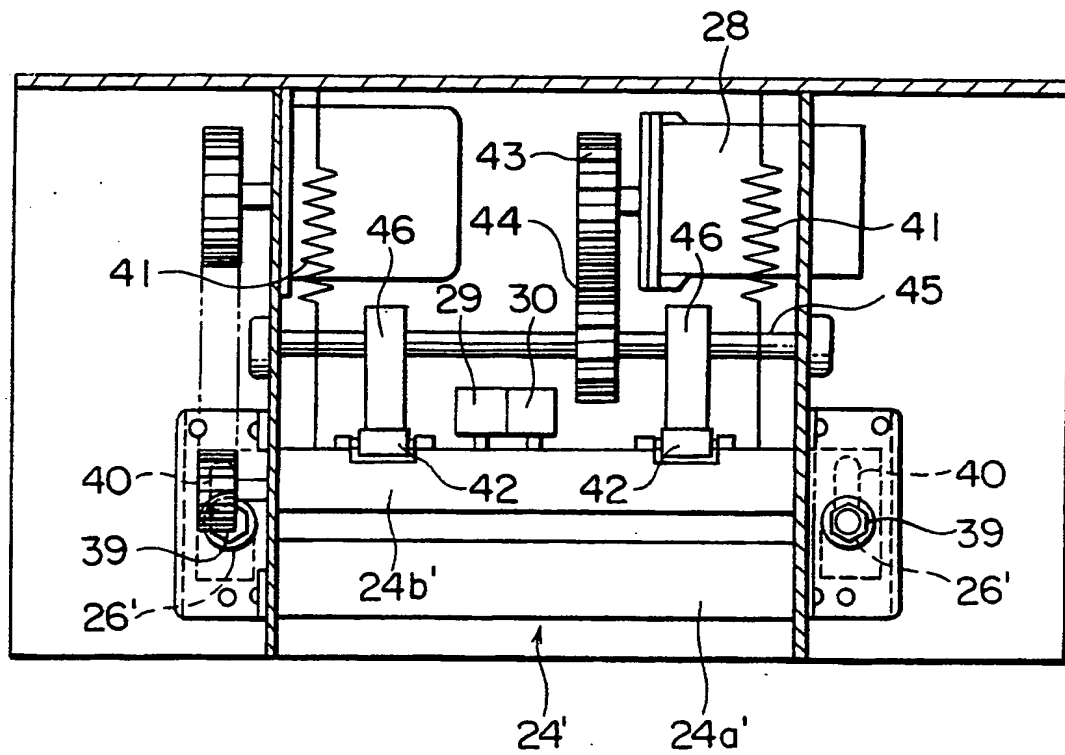


FIG. 10

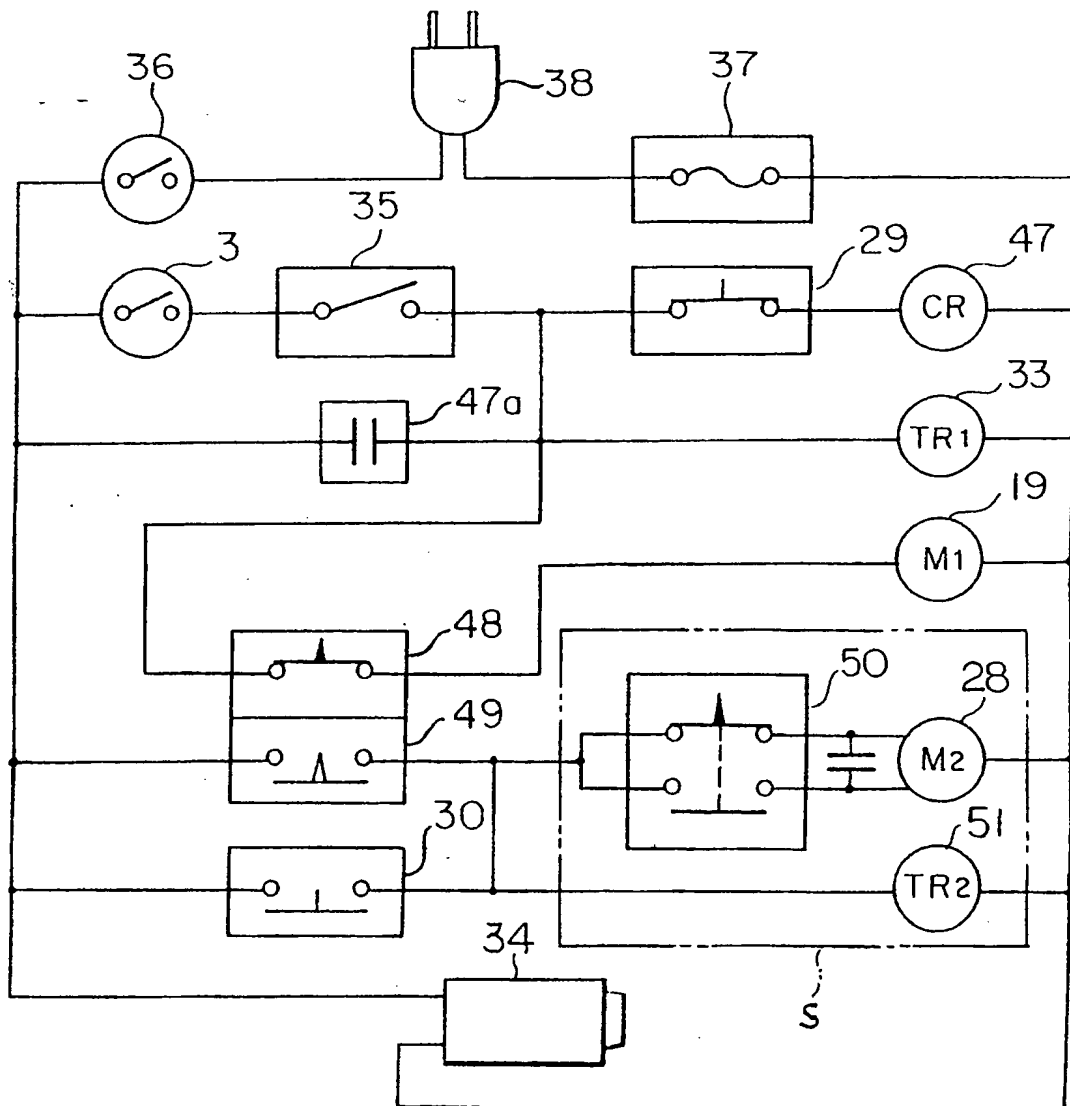
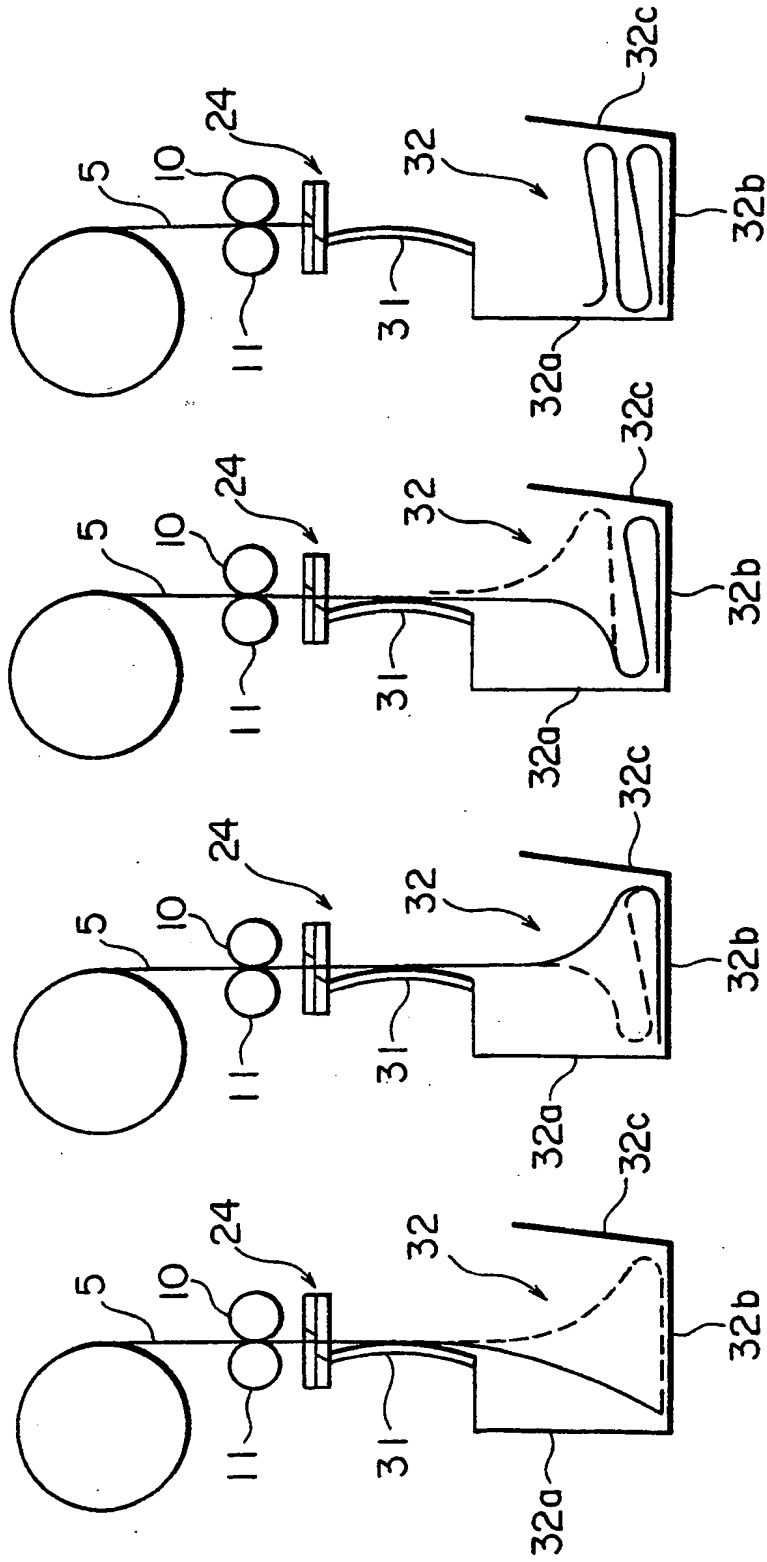


FIG.11 (A) FIG.11 (B) FIG.11 (C) FIG.11 (D)



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No PCT/JP90/00201

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|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (If several classification symbols apply, indicate all) * | | |
| According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC | | |
| Int. Cl ⁵ A47K10/34 | | |
| II. FIELDS SEARCHED | | |
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| Classification System | Classification Symbols | |
| IPC | A47K10/24 - 10/40 | |
| Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched * | | |
| Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1907 - 1989 Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1971 - 1989 | | |
| III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT * | | |
| Category * | Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹² | Relevant to Claim No. ¹³ |
| A | JP, U, 62-153997 (Yoshikatsu Furuichi), 30 September 1987 (30. 09. 87), (Family: none) | 1 - 13 |
| A | JP, U, 58-74897 (Tsurenobu Ooka), 20 May 1983 (20. 05. 83), (Family: none) | 1 - 13 |
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